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ABSTRACT

Teacher collaboration is characterized by joint work; shared responsibilities; and the existence of high levels of trust, respect, and mutuality. This paper presents findings of a study that identified some of the forms and contents of self-initiated collaboration among high school teachers. Data were gathered through interviews with 10 teachers (5 partnerships) in a large city in Alberta, Canada, transcripts of audiotaped discussions between the partners, followup interviews, and a focus-group meeting. The form and content of the collaborative partnerships were determined by a combination of individual and organizational factors. At various times these factors merged to form a nexus that resulted in the formation and later reformations of the collaboration. The degree to which the collaborations were self-initiated varied both within and between the partnerships. The nexus of organizational and individual factors affected the extent to which the individuals felt free to initiate or respond to the opportunities to enter into the partnerships. The activities undertaken in the collaborations served four broad purposes: pedagogical, professional development, micropolitical, and individual support/relationship maintenance. Salient features of all the partnerships included reciprocity of effort, mutuality of outcomes, and sharing of educational resources and materials. The ways in which individual differences were handled was one of the most important determinants of the nature of the evolving partnership. Two tables and two figures are included. (Contains 18 references.) (LMI)

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SELF INITIATED HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER COLLABORATION

by

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SELF INITIATED HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER COLLABORATION

The objective of this study in progress was to address the question: What are some of the forms and contents of self-initiated collaboration among high school teachers? This question was considered worthy of investigation for a number of reasons. First, the extensive literature on the sociology of teaching (e.g., Waller, 1932; Lortie, 1975; Connell, 1985; and Rosenholz 1991), professional development (e.g., Fullan, 1990; Grimmett & Crehan, 1990; and Acheson & Gall, 1992) and the insights gleaned from micropolitical analyses of schools (e.g., Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991; and Hargreaves, 1994) led to the view that collaboration among teachers is a rich and complex phenomenon worthy of further study.

The second factor that motivated this inquiry was the paucity of empirical studies of collaboration at the high school level. The result has been that calls for greater collaboration have been made based on either assumptions about practice or data gleaned from studies of elementary teachers. The debilitating effects of contrived collegiality (Hargreaves, 1991), balkanization (Hargreaves, 1994), group think (Nelson & Quick, 1994) and hegemonic mono-cultures (Lindblom, 1994) have as much potential to thwart reform as do the effects of loose-coupling, teacher isolation, and school cultures that enable teachers to work beyond the scrutiny of their peers. Little (1990) and Hargreaves (1994) have both noted the current enthusiasm for collaboration. Therefore our intent was to develop a description, grounded in the understandings of teachers with a reputation for extensive and effective work with colleagues, of the forms and contents of their collaboration.

Relationship to Existing Research and Literature

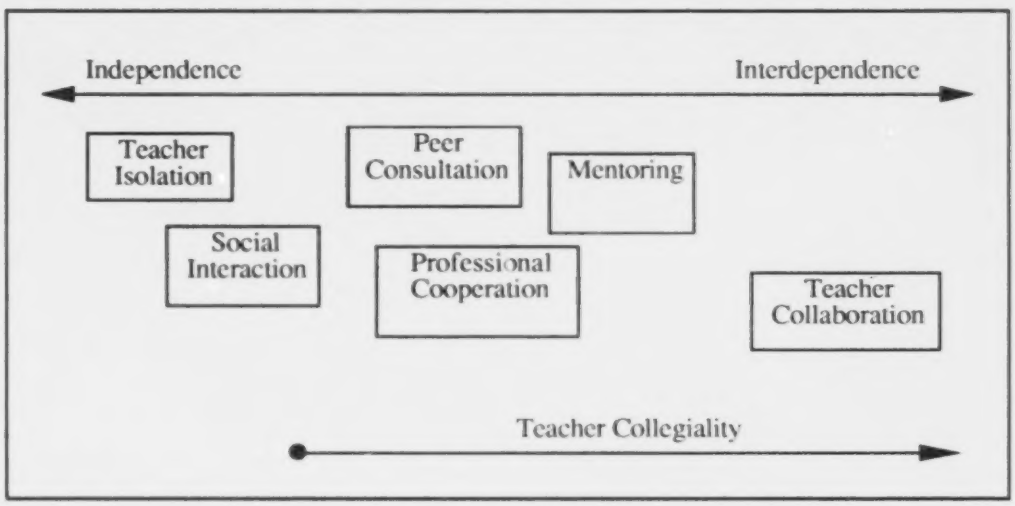
The literature on teacher collegiality and collaboration can be located on a conceptual continuum. Toward one end of that continuum are research reports and expert comment that take a functionalist/managerial perspective. Writers adopting this perspective analyze the efficiency and effectiveness of collegial activities. At the other end of the continuum is literature about collegiality as a characteristic of a culture of teaching. Literature located toward this end of the continuum analyzes teaching in terms of teacher behaviours and socialization as well as attitudes and beliefs held by groups of teachers about their work.

One of the problems with this literature is that terms such as collaboration, collegiality, and colleagueship are often used interchangeably. The work of Little (1987, 1990), Lortie (1975), and Conley, Bas-Isaac, and Scull (1995) was especially insightful and helpful in developing operational definitions of collaboration, collegiality, professional cooperation, peer consultation,

and so on. The Teacher Peer Relations Continuum (Figure 1), based on the work of the above authors, was particularly useful in conceptualizing the study and identifying participants.

FIGURE 1

Teacher Peer Relations Continuum [1]



Note 1. Adapted from Lortie (1975), Little (1987, 1990) and Conley, Bas-Isaac, and Scull (1995)

Teacher collaboration, in this study, has these characteristics: joint work, shared responsibility, and the existence of high levels of trust, respect, and mutuality. Collaborative activities are more frequent and intense than other collegial behaviours. Teachers who work collaboratively think and behave on the basis of an understanding of teaching as a shared responsibility and an understanding of student learning as the result of cooperative activity. The scrutiny of the peers therefore is welcomed. (See Little, 1990; & Lortie, 1975.)

Method and Data Sources

Principals in both public and separate school systems in a large city in Alberta were contacted and asked to nominate pairs of teachers in their schools whose work was judged to conform to the definition of collaboration provided above. The nominees were contacted and 10 were selected on the basis of their willingness to participate and our assessment of the extent to which their working relationships satisfied our operational definition of collaboration. These partnerships varied in terms of their gender combination, teaching experience, age, subject specializations, and length of partnership. Demographic information about the participants is presented in Table 1. The participants and their schools have all been given pseudonyms. The names of the teachers in each partnership and their school have been assigned pseudonyms that begin with the same letter.

Data were gathered from scheduled initial interviews, transcripts of audio-tapes of discussions between the teachers in each pairing, follow-up interviews based a schedule developed for each participant, and a focus–group meeting which involved the participants and ourselves in a discussion of the preliminary findings. The comments of the participants in the focus group discussion, along with standard member checking of transcripts and the triangulation provided by the inclusion of the transcribed discussions between the teachers, comprised the warrants for asserting the trustworthiness of both the data and the findings.

Findings

The following are the findings in relation to the research question: What are some of the forms and contents of self-initiated collaboration among high school teachers? Three questions are subsumed under Question 1: (a) How have the partnerships developed? (b) What tasks do these teachers attend to when they collaborate? and (c) How do these teachers collaborate? The responses to each of the sub-questions are presented for each partnership in turn.

Nature of the Individual Partnerships

Peter and Patrick

Peter and Patrick taught in the Science Department at Parkview High School. They were close in both age and years of teaching experience. Patrick had taught at Parkview for several years, whereas Peter, who had taught on a casual basis at Parkview and at other schools, was in his first year as a permanent member of staff.

TABLE 1. *Participant Demographic Data*

Participants with teacher partner	Age range	Range of years of teaching experience	Years at current school	School (Catholic or Public)	Enrollment and grades offered	Subjects taught
Patrick	31-35	6-10	7	Parkview High School (Public)	>2000 10-12	Science Physics
Peter	31-35	1-5	1			Science Physics
Jenny	36-40	11-15	5	St. John High School (Catholic)	>900 10-12	English Humanities
James	36-40	16-20	11			Social Science Humanities
Harry	46-50	16-20	3	Hindmarsh High School (Public)	<150 9-11	Science Computers
Helen	31-35	1-5	2			Science Computers
Anne	41-45	11-15	4	St. Agnes High School (Catholic)	>1500 10-12	English Religion Humanities
Alan	46-50	26-30	3			English Humanities
Cathy	46-50	26-30	11	St. Clare High School (Catholic)	>800 10-12	English (Special Education)
Christine	41-45	11-15	10			English Business Studies (Special Education)

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Development of the partnership. Peter and Patrick had shared resources and worked together for more than two years. Unlike other partnerships in this study, these teachers began to collaborate prior to their working in the same school. They met through a local Physics teachers' group. Peter explained "even when I was at a different school . . . last year, we'd get together once in a while and do things and share material." They had a common goal, described by Peter as "fast-tracking learning." They shared resources—unit outlines, student handouts, and the like —and occasionally demonstrated or explained the various uses of different apparatus used in Physics laboratories. Peter and Patrick also discovered that they shared a common interest in mountain climbing and computers. This year they extended the frequency and broadened the focus of their sharing.

Patrick described his work with Peter as being more mutual and frequent than his dealings with other colleagues. For example, when Patrick first arrived at the school he was helped by Jim, a 19-year veteran Physics teacher, but the collaboration "was initially one way . . . he had all the great ideas and materials and I was just receiving. Then slowly I had what I needed and then I would offer him things . . . and he would offer me things . . . but it's at a much slower rate." Less mutuality was also a feature of Patrick's work with several Biology teachers whom he contacted for assistance when assigned to teach a general Science class. Patrick felt that he benefitted from their assistance but that he was unable to offer much in return.

Realizing that Peter was in need of resources when he first arrived, and aware of the value of the assistance he had received from Jim when he was in a similar situation, Patrick offered to help. Peter reciprocated by assisting Patrick with computer resources and copies of student worksheets, assignments, and tests. Both teachers identified this reciprocity as an important feature of their collaboration. Along with their similar ages, professional aspirations, and other factors described below, mutuality explains why this partnership has continued and developed, while the two other working relationships described above diminished.

While they shared similar recreational interests, they seldom socialized or engaged together in these recreational pursuits. Their collaboration had an almost exclusive work–focus.

Collaborative tasks. Peter and Patrick agreed that their collaboration mostly involved sharing resources and ideas and demonstrating various uses of laboratory equipment. They also engaged in general discussion about teaching and classroom management. Patrick explained their work in this way:

There are all sorts of little demos or ways to show how something works. For example, try this apparatus working in this way and that will demonstrate how the speedometer works. That sort of thing, you know, with an apparatus. We also discuss resources, such as, test item questions, assignment questions, and other computer related materials. General teaching . . . I guess philosophy, you know how to deal with certain management issues such as dealing with students who have cheated.

Peter mentioned that they periodically discussed how to approach colleagues and administrators regarding pupil behaviour. For example, when a student had been suspected of cheating on an exam, Peter's ethical and practical concerns were discussed with Patrick. Sharing such concerns and seeking and giving advice were, according to these teachers, important but infrequent, aspects of their collaboration.

Occasionally, the two teachers worked together to prepare workshops and resources for other teachers in their Physics teachers' group.

One major project we're working on together right now is something called a "make and take" where Physics teachers will come from other schools to our school. We're running a workshop where other Physics teachers will construct certain demo apparatus and take it with them when they leave. So Pete and I are working together on the workshop.

Such sharing was not intentionally confined to teachers outside the school. Patrick mentioned on three occasions during the two interviews how he had endeavoured to include the two other Physics teachers in their school, but had only limited success. He attributed their disinclination to join their younger colleagues to the view that they were "comfortable" with what they were doing. In other words, they had all the materials and resources that they needed.

Peter and Patrick were asked to identify activities that were not part of their collaboration. Both listed discussion about colleagues, especially if it involved "negative talk," observation of each other's teaching, and team–teaching. Patrick also mentioned that they tended not to share personal evaluations of their own work. That these more personal aspects of teaching were outside the boundaries of their collaboration was alluded to by Peter when he stated that their working relationship was not "a close friendship."

When questioned why team–teaching was excluded, various factors were cited, including potential problems that could emerge because of their different teaching styles and the nature of the subject matter. Both described in detail the differences between their teaching styles. Patrick said he preferred to work with small groups of students and did not think the dynamics of a large group

would match his teaching style. On the other hand, Peter liked to teach to the whole class, structuring his lessons around a carefully prepared package of handouts for the topic. Patrick did not completely eliminate the possibility of team teaching:

> *I would prefer not to team-teach. However, I do enjoy a form of team-teaching that we use in the grade 10 general Science course. It has a biological component and then a Physics/Chemistry component. Typically what we're doing now is the Physics/Chem component is taught by one teacher and the Biology component by the other teacher. And so they're taught in different blocks. Yet we share in as much as the student gets only one Science mark. It can be as simple as one person handling the spread-sheets and the other person doing the calculations. What I've found beneficial is that it gives another teacher's perspective on the same kid in the same class. So I guess it's a step towards team teaching that I do like that. And it's marvellous to get another person's perspective on the class and individual students.*

Whereas Peter said that he would have no hesitation in having Patrick observe one of his lessons, Patrick was more reluctant. In the second interview, Patrick revisited this issue, attributing his reluctance to be observed to the view that such practices were not a part of the school culture. While planned peer-observation was not a part of their collaboration, casual observation did occur. Peter said that he had observed Patrick teach when he first came to the school. Occasionally, while working in the Science preparation room which adjoined Patrick's teaching laboratory, Peter had seen Patrick teach. Coincidentally, Patrick told how he had also taken advantage of the physical arrangement of the laboratory preparation room to observe Jim. In his first few years at the school, Patrick had frequently sat and listened to Jim and paid attention to how Jim explained concepts and responded to student questions. This covert observation partially accounts for how these teachers were able to describe in some detail how their colleagues taught. Further, there was a general awareness and acceptance that because of the physical layout of the Science facilities, laboratory teaching was conducted within the potential sight and hearing of colleagues.

Processes and frequency. The central aspect of Peter and Patrick's collaboration was the exchange of materials. The preparation of these materials was conducted independently and, as Peter explained, "it takes a lot of work to get the material together. So if there is an exchange —that is, if the other person can reciprocate now and then—that makes it easier."

Additionally, the two teachers talked to each other on a daily basis. Such discussions were the most frequent activity. As was described above, these discussions pertained to classroom matters, but were depersonalized. In other words, the talk was about the unit, the student, the lab, the demonstration, a management issue, or "about something that is going on in the school," and

not about themselves or their teaching. This talk occurred between classes and during lunch as Peter and Patrick were rarely scheduled for a preparation period at the same time.

Arranged meetings occurred less frequently and were scheduled after 3:30 pm since both teachers regularly stay until 5:00 pm, using this time to prepare lessons and labs for the following day. At the planned meetings they typically worked on a joint project, such as planning for the "make and take" activity.

The audio-tape that the teachers supplied of one of their meetings provided further evidence of the high level of mutuality and reciprocity of effort that characterized this collaboration. Both asked questions, offered alternatives, and negotiated mutually satisfactory decisions. The following exchange was typical of their audio-taped interaction. In this excerpt Peter and Patrick were in the process of drafting a letter to their colleagues which outlined the program for their "make and take" meeting:

Patrick:	*Yes. Take a break and then that will take us to . . . want to say working projects 'til 9 p.m.?*
Peter:	*Yes.*
Patrick:	*Or did you want to say eight o'clock?*
Peter:	*Make it too late and then they might not want to come, but once they're here if it goes later than the scheduled time, they're already here. 8:30 compromise?*
Patrick:	*Sure. So we have date, we have a time . . . so meet at the office at Parkview.*
Peter:	*Have them meet at the office . . .*
Patrick:	*If they meet outside the office at least we know that's a kind of a central meeting place and then we can take them down from there.*

These interactions were carried out in a friendly manner and they spoke in a positive tone, seeking, wherever possible, to incorporate each other's ideas with their own.

In summary, these teachers talked daily about classroom related issues in a congenial way. Arranged meetings occurred periodically and were scheduled after school hours. Such meetings were typically used for either laboratory demonstrations or joint-planning. Independently prepared classroom teaching materials were freely shared in a reciprocal manner.

Jenny and James

Jenny and James were team-teaching one of the Humanities courses at St. John High School. This was the first year that they have worked together, although both had team-taught with others in the past. They were close in age and both have taught at the school for several years. While members of different departments in the school, they knew each other well and referred to each other as friends. Jenny worked part-time and was the only participant in this study to be employed under such a contract.

Development of partnership. James approached Jenny toward the end of the previous school year and asked if she would like to team-teach the Humanities 10 course. She accepted without hesitation. The Humanities course was a combination of the Social Science and English programs and as such, tended to be co-taught by two teachers, one from the English Department and the other from the Social Sciences Department. When James' previous Humanities co-teacher formally announced that he would be leaving the school at the end of the 1994-95 school year, the principal asked James to co-opt a replacement from the English department.

Jenny, who was teaching English and French at the time, had been told that she would not be teaching French in the following year because a member of the Languages department was returning from leave. It was at this time that she was approached by James. By accepting the offer Jenny felt she would gain some respite from a "straight English load," and strengthen her position in terms of future part-time contract negotiations. Her contract status, although not a major factor in her reasoning, was she said, "always there, in the back of my mind, whenever I agree or disagree to something."

Jenny and James began team-teaching after the Christmas break. During the first half of the year they had several meetings at which they planned the course. After Christmas they continued these meetings. The focus of the their meetings gradually changed from general planning and structure to dealing with more specific classroom issues.

Collaborative tasks. This collaboration involved three related activities. The first, and most obvious, was the team-teaching of the Humanities program. Second, Jenny and James engaged in planned meetings, and finally, they exchanged resources and ideas on an informal and sporadic basis. A description of each of these activities follows.

Jenny and James structured the course in a way that allowed for both whole-group and small-group instruction. As Jenny explained in an interview prior to Christmas, "there are places

where we won't integrate and it will be my subject when I teach *Romeo and Juliet*. But when I'm teaching the short story or poetry in the midst of Canadian history, I hope that it's ours." During the whole-group instruction lessons both teachers were usually in the classroom. While one did the bulk of the teaching, the other occasionally interjected to make a point. Students were regularly engaged in small group work during these large classes. At these times, both teachers moved from group to group, monitored student progress, answered questions, and gave directions.

At the planned meetings a wide range of issues were addressed. These issues included (a) discussion about their different teaching styles, the purpose of the humanities course, and how particular lessons or units would be presented, (b) sharing of resources, such as newspaper articles, and (c) lesson planning and the assessment of students' work. The sporadic meetings occurred less frequently partly because Jenny only worked in the mornings. At these occasional meetings, issues of pressing and practical concern relating to the class were raised.

While this collaboration appeared to address most aspects involved in the delivery of the Humanities course, certain activities were undertaken independently. Jenny said that while she would often "bounce ideas off James," she maintained responsibility for those aspects of the course that were within her specific area of expertise. From his perspective, James believed that there was no reason for Jenny to be involved with, or to relate to the students, in the same manner that he did. Both teachers were keen to maintain independence over areas that they believed to be their comparative, professional strengths: Jenny in her knowledge of the English curriculum, and James in the area of his interaction with students.

Processes and frequency. The most frequent activity in this collaboration was classroom instruction which occurred several times a week. Formal meetings occurred less frequently, usually on a weekly basis. Jenny's part-time schedule and their different subject department memberships meant that informal meetings occurred least frequently.

Formal meetings involved discussions that ranged from their teaching styles to specific details of planning for lessons. The process of planning invariably involved negotiation. In the following statement, Jenny described an incident where the need for negotiation became apparent:

> *I was mentioning to him that I had found some good poetry selections and I thought it would be a great idea for us to teach poetry through the course rather than what we traditionally do in sort of a modular form. So I was mentioning that I thought it would be really nice to integrate poetry with everything and James was thinking "well aren't the kids going to get confused?" I just thought he would say "great idea, let's go with it." So he wasn't just jumping on my bandwagon. So I guess I will have to do a bit of convincing*

> *because I think that is integration—true integration—and I don't think it's teaching something separate to another subject. So we've got lots of things to deal with.*

In addition, James observed that integration demanded the identification or development of appropriate teaching materials:

> *We've exchanged material, mostly from my side because I've already been through the program once and we've tried to attack the integration of Social and English and what Jenny and I would be comfortable with. At this point we're doing a lot of research because we need to find material. It's really the biggest drawback to a new course—just getting information.*

This collaboration was also seen by both teachers as a learning process. The realization that team-teaching required specific skills and that it presented certain challenges was evident in the following extract where James talked about his experiences of team-teaching:

> *We've talked philosophy, we've talked about what our objectives are, we've talked about the reality of being together the first year and not to put too much pressure on ourselves. I was with a wonderful man last year. He was just an incredible teacher but we made some mistakes, some mistakes that I'd love to have back in terms of some direction, some expectation was a little bit too much. Also learning to be in front of 60 rather than 30 students is a change in itself.*

Finally, James noted at meetings between he and Jenny, much of the time was devoted to learning how to work together:

> *I feel that the meetings we do have right now are as much about learning about each other as about where we're going with the curriculum--with the program. In team-teaching it's the chemistry that is the most important thing and being sensitive to one another and understanding one another. Even though we are good friends and we've been colleagues for a few years now, this is a different experience for us.*

Both teachers felt that being good friends was an important factor that allowed them to deal with their differences because, as James explained, "it's easier to accept criticism, it's easier to accept change when you really understand the motives and the person so I think we have an advantage."

In conclusion, Jenny and James felt that their existing friendship was an important factor in their decision to work together. Like Peter and Patrick, they had differences in their teaching style and preferences. These differences, because of the team-teaching focus of this collaboration, presented issues that had to be discussed and resolved in order for the course to be presented. Whereas Peter and Patrick could work around their pedagogical differences and still profitably exchange resources and ideas, Jenny and James found themselves having to work through their differences and come to negotiated solutions. As a result, Jenny and James were learning about themselves, their partner, and how to teach together. They also derived the benefits of

professional support gained from collaboration with a resourceful colleague that were enjoyed by Peter and Patrick.

Helen and Harry

Working in the smallest school in the study, Helen and Harry were wholly responsible for the delivery of the Biology, Chemistry, and Computing courses. The distinguishing feature of this collaboration was that their decision to collaborate was based on a shared belief in the benefits of close cooperation between teachers within a subject area, rather than on a deliberate choice to work with each other. Another factor to be borne in mind, and one which further distinguished this partnership from the others in the study, was the significant difference in the ages—more than 15 years—of the two teachers involved.

Development of partnership. Helen and Harry had worked together for two years. The collaboration began soon after Helen's arrival at Hindmarsh. Initially the collaboration was beset with problems. Both teachers were open about their conflicts and differences in their approach to teaching, but also noted that in recent months their relations had improved. Helen and Harry attributed their difficulties to their mutual competitiveness. As Helen explained "There is a little bit of tension between us. We're both very, very competitive people and it's not very bad this year, but last year towards the end of the year, it was kind of . . . a tug-of-war over who should get the 30 level classes." Harry was more succinct: "We're both very competitive. She's extremely competitive and I'm a little worse!"

These comments were offered in good humour—another salient feature of this partnership—and despite the "tug-of-war" they managed to resolve most of their differences in ways that enhanced their professional respect for each other. As Helen said, "we get on better now." While Helen and Harry both stated that they would probably not work together if there were other teachers in their department, they were able to identify specific benefits that they derived from their partnership. The significant point here is that dealing with their differences was an important aspect of the development of this partnership.

Two other shared characteristics also had a major impact on the direction and growth of this partnership. Both teachers professed to, and recognized in each other, "a love of science." Much of their interaction centred around sharing stories and knowledge about their subject matter. Further, they shared a strong commitment to the future growth and viability of their school. They believed that their collaboration was an important means of ensuring the quality of their teaching and the satisfaction and success of their students.

Without these commonalities it is difficult to imagine why these teachers were inclined to work together. As Helen said, "I work with Harry simply because he and I are the two teachers that teach Computers and teach Science together." Harry made a similar comment, and at another time he admitted "I've probably irritated the heck out of her sometimes." Interestingly, Helen also admitted, "I think I probably annoy him."

During the interviews with these teachers it became apparent that they frequently identified the same issues and used the same words and constructions to express their ideas:

1. Helen and Harry both referred to Harry's teaching style in the Science laboratory as "a real blow 'em up kind of guy."

2. Helen said that she was "very organized" and that she worked probably too hard, Harry referred to her as being "super organized" and commented that she worked too hard and placed too high an expectation on herself.

3. Harry said Helen was used to high school teaching and that meant that she expected the students to work through the content. Helen admitted that she was used to high school teaching and that she expected the students to be motivated enough to work through the content.

4. Harry said he was more effective than Helen with the Grade 9 and 10 students because he was more experienced and could identify easily with students in that age group. Helen said Harry was better with the junior classes as he seemed to relate well to the students because of his experience.

These were only several of the many examples. Despite their admitted difficulties, the congruence of their insights and observations suggested a high level of familiarity likely gained through an open and substantial professional interaction.

Collaborative tasks. Hindmarsh had applied for certification to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. During the 1995/96 school year Helen and Harry spent considerable amounts of time preparing for the new courses that would be offered if the application were successful. In addition, both teachers exchanged programs and resources in a manner similar to that which was described in relation to Peter and Patrick's collaboration. The final aspect of Helen and Harry's collaboration involved occasional, but lengthy, general discussions about science.

The IB preparation involved an analysis of existing courses, the IB Science courses, and an identification of resources that will be needed. One of the tasks involved was the selection of

appropriate texts. Helen and Harry decided on several potential texts and then compared their evaluations of these texts before agreeing on which would be best. They also discussed how the programs would be organized, who would be best placed to teach each course, and advised the principal on the courses they felt should be taught by new teachers.

The exchange of resources included sharing worksheets, class tests, labs, pertinent articles from magazines and journals, stories related to particular units that could be used to highlight key points in a topic or engage the students' interest, and entire programs. As Harry explained, "I don't know how I would have got through Bio 20 last year without all the material from Helen." For her part, Helen appreciated the times when Harry gave her a copy of article he had read: "One day he brought in a book on the Ebola Virus to give to me or he'll photocopy an article that he reads because he thinks it might be good for one of my classes." At other times Harry explained how certain labs could be incorporated in a particular topic.

The third aspect of this collaboration was the occasional discussion of matters relating to the Science curriculum. These discussions involved the sharing of knowledge and were described as a learning experience by both teachers. Helen's previous experience as a registered nurse and her Science degree meant that she had a greater knowledge of biology and physiology, whereas Harry's wide reading and fascination with science had afforded him with different areas of expertise. As Helen explained,

> *He knows a lot about a lot of things and the areas of Science that he knows a lot about, are different areas that I know things about. So a lot of times we'll just have Science discussions that have nothing to do with our curriculum or anything, it's just that we get interested in talking about things.*

These discussions appeared to be the most enjoyable aspect of the collaboration for both teachers. Harry actually defined collaboration as "the sharing of things, and ideas, and its fun."

Both teachers were asked what was excluded from their collaboration. Helen said that she did not observe Harry's teaching, although they had "popped in" on each other from "time to time." She said that his visits did not cause her any concern. In addition she said that she had "heard him teach." This was similar to comments made by Patrick, Peter, and Jenny about their covert observation of their partners' teaching. If she had a criticism of the way Harry was teaching a particular topic, Helen said that she would approach the matter "very carefully" and that she would probably direct her comments "at the topic, not at him."

Harry was emphatic that he would never team-teach as it would encroach on the privacy of the classroom:

> *I like to be the king of my castle and my classroom is my classroom. I've only just, after 20 years, become comfortable with people coming into my room. That is my domain and I don't really like anybody being in there except me and my students.*

Harry was also adamant that he would not talk with Helen about any concerns he may have with her teaching. Such matters were, according to Harry, the responsibility of the administration, not peers. The third activity that Harry said he would not share in with Helen was the discussion of his personal philosophy of teaching. He spoke at length about the notion of discovery learning and the importance of teaching thinking and problem solving skills. Asked if he and Helen ever discussed these matters, Harry replied that she would not understand what he was talking about because they were "on two different planets."

Processes and frequency. The main processes involved in this collaboration were talking and sharing resources. Helen and Harry were similar to Peter and Patrick, also Science teachers, in that their collaboration was a process for sharing ideas and gaining knowledge about their subject matter. As Harry said,

> *I see collaboration basically as a sharing of ideas. I don't see it as doing things together, I see it as I've got something that works, try this and you try it. It is generosity and everybody gets better for it.*

In the following passage Harry talked about how this sharing worked. These comments were typical of the numerous examples cited by the participants in this study:

> *Helen had been having a little bit of trouble with this grade ten class and she was quite scared to go down and do the lab with them. They are a difficult group. It was a lab that involved balancing chemical reactions and I said, "one thing that worked for me was that I had them balance the reactions as they did them, and actually try to identify what was in the reaction, what the products were, and then we made a little hall of fame where they had to write the balanced reaction and the first group who got it went on the hall of fame." She did it and it went real well. She said she had a really good class. So that was a good feeling. But generally what we've just done is always just given each other materials. As I said before, she's an extremely well organized person who has everything and I'm actually learning to be that way because I'm copying it because I just see how good it is.*

As was noted earlier, these teachers had to reconcile some of their differences in order to be able to work together. They managed to develop a compromise position regarding the assignment of classes this year. Harry said in his second interview that he was now surprised at how easily they were "getting on." Clearly, an important process in this collaboration was the negotiation of

some of their differences and the development of compromise solutions to their competing preferences for teaching specific classes.

Anne and Alan

Anne and Alan team-taught English 20—the Grade 11 academic course—at St. Agnes School. They were currently in the second year of team-teaching this course. Anne described their collaboration as the "discovery of ideas," while for Alan it

> *means to look to share for the purpose of teaching and learning. And to do that, you have to have some kind of a focus in mind. I speak in passing to a dozen different people each day, and sometimes I'll touch on what we're doing in class or somebody will say "Do you have any ideas for this?" and I'll do the same, and that kind of thing happens. But that's not collaboration. Collaboration is speaking expressly for the purpose of deepening and broadening my own understandings, or helping someone do the same. I think there needs to be a focus and the focus is either imposed, or there's an inherent belief that by interacting with that person, I am going to become a better teacher.*

Both teachers concluded that they were "better teachers" through the "discovery of ideas" that occurred in their collaboration.

Development of partnership. Major renovations were commenced two years ago at St. Agnes. The school administrators were faced with the problem of having fewer classrooms during the renovation. They approached Alan and asked if he would consider team-teaching English 20. A large room that could comfortably accommodate 60 students was available and by combining two classes the demand for classrooms would be eased. Alan agreed and nominated Anne as his partner when he was asked to suggest another English teacher with whom he would like to work. Anne explained how she was then approached by the principal: "He said when renovations were starting, would I be willing to team teach? And I said with whom? He said Alan. I said I'd teach with Alan tomorrow. I meant it in theory!" She explained that they "used to trade-off a lot and discuss ideas" and she felt comfortable with the prospect of working more closely with her colleague.

In the first year Alan said that they "put in stupid amounts of time," often after school, planning their lessons, discussing various approaches, and learning how to work in the classroom with each other. They described the process of joint-planning in a manner similar to Peter's notion of "double-thinking" wherein they found themselves exploring the justifications for particular classroom strategies.

Having been through the time-consuming phase of their collaboration, Anne explained that they were now "more in sync" and Alan felt that they were "reaping the benefits" of their hard work. At the end of the first year, with the renovations completed, they decided to continue team-teaching English 20.

Collaborative tasks. Anne and Alan were asked to think about all the tasks involved in teaching English 20. They were then asked to nominate which of these tasks were done alone and which were done together. Both said "we do everything together." When pressed for examples they explained how they taught, presented, planned, evaluated, shared resources, offered each other advice, kept each other on track during the lessons, and even interrupted each other while they were presenting. Anne said that in many ways Alan "is my teacher . . . we learn from each other."

The closest they came to working alone was in the marking of students' work, although Alan did say they talked about how papers should be marked. The discussions culminated in the preparation of assessment criteria. These criteria were then presented and explained to the students when the assignments were given. Alan also explained that they often helped each other with the marking.

Processes and frequency. This collaboration was the most pervasive of those in the study. The processes of the collaboration extended beyond the complex and interrelated processes of teaching into the realm of discourse. The discourse occurred between the teachers and their philosophies, knowledge, and experiences of teaching and life. Anne explained the process as "talking constantly" and discovering that they had "similar intellectual interests." For Alan it was a process that transcended sharing, it was a "particular type of thinking" that dealt with "why" and not just "what."

The teachers also noted that the process "changes over time." As issues were explored and resolved, Anne and Alan grew in their understanding of their work and each other, which in turn helped them to deal more efficiently with new matters as they arose. It is in this manner that they found the demands placed on their time were easing. As Anne said: "We used to meet every day. It was very, very time consuming." She proceeded to explain that now their collaboration was most intense at the "start of a unit or a semester." Alan noted that now they just meet "occasionally over lunch," with the most frequent collaboration occurring in the classroom, but that they still "talk all the time."

A final characteristic of their interaction was the enjoyment and professional growth they derived from working together in the classroom. They had achieved a level of comfort and trust that allowed them to "joke and have fun" with each other and to share this "fun" with the students. Anne talked about their different teaching styles: Alan was more formal and distant in his interactions with students while she was more interactive. Alan also described this difference and said he admired the way that Anne related to the students. He said that working with Anne helped him to be more relaxed, whereas Anne attributed her growth in being more task-focussed to her observation of Alan's style. They felt that they were modelling healthy adult interactions and that their students appreciated their openness. They believed that their teaching styles were complementary and that their teaching of English 20 was highly effective. Having observed them teach, such beliefs are well-founded.

Cathy and Christine

A summarised version of the results of the preliminary analysis of the interview and conference transcripts were presented to the participants during a focus-group discussion. One of the discussions that ensued related to the natures and foci of the partnerships. Cathy and Christine stated in their interviews, and reiterated during the group discussion, that their collaboration was best understood as "conferencing about kids." The singularity and substance of this focus differentiated this collaboration from the others.

Cathy and Christine shared the primary responsibility for the Special Education programs at St. Clare. Initially, neither were trained in Special Education, however, Christine had since completed a masters' degree program in this area. They shared a common interest in meeting students' individual learning needs and it was this interest that permeated their collaboration.

Development of partnership. Cathy had worked at St. Clare since it opened. Christine joined the staff in the following year. Four years ago Cathy started an integrated Special Education program. She explained how the program developed and how Christine became involved:

> *I started the program up on a 1/2 time basis. We brought grade 10s into the program and then as we expanded and had them go into grades 11 and 12, we needed another person. I went full-time the following year and then Christine was brought in on a half-time basis. I was asked if there was anyone on staff in particular that I thought I could work with teaching these children. I wasn't given full range of choice, of course that just stands to reason, but Christine seemed to be an excellent choice right off the bat. She's just a very easy person to get along with, so I knew I'd be able to work with her.*

As they started to work together, Cathy soon realized that "it was the fact that Christine could see each of the students as individuals that I really appreciated and I think that's what was the main tie to begin with."

Christine explained that they began their collaboration by team-teaching. She found this to be a valuable experience:

> *As a teacher, you don't get the opportunity to watch another teacher teach very often . . . hardly at all, except when you're student-teaching. So I found that really valuable for myself; just to watch her in the classroom as well. I'm not an English major and I'm essentially teaching English, so I needed the sort of background that I got from her.*

Christine became increasingly interested in Special Education. Now in their third year of working together the teachers have established a pattern of meeting regularly to "conference about the students." The content of these conferences is described below. Christine is still engaged on a part-time basis in this program. She said that she would like to teach full-time in the Special Education program but is required to continue to teach Business Studies.

Collaborative tasks. Cathy identified several tasks as being central to their collaboration. These included developing Individual Program Plans (IPPs) and sharing teaching resources. The teachers also worked together to educate their colleagues about the Special Education program and strategies that could be employed in the classroom to help students who were experiencing learning difficulties. In this extract, Cathy talked about an inservice that they were preparing for their colleagues:

> *We are preparing an inservice for the teachers on staff so that we can once again specify--even though we have given them specific information about our roles and so on, and about the students we teach--to make them a little more aware of what we do and what we can do.*

The use of the words "once again" and her tone of exasperation prompted further questioning about their work with the rest of the staff. As Cathy explained their work with colleagues, further insights into some of the tasks and frustrations these teachers faced in collaborating on a Special Education program emerged:

> *I think they feel that if we approach them about a student or talk to them about a student that we're challenging their ability to teach, and not discussing this child's ability to learn. And we're not doing that. We're simply trying to give them the idea that different things work with different children. Also, at the end of the school year we timetable our kids for their following school year and in doing so, we're able to put them into a timetable that is very flexible for them and we also try and hand-pick their teachers. And that's not to say that we don't have wonderful teachers on our staff. All of our teachers are very, very good at what they do, but some are just a little more flexible than others or some of them just seem to work with students in a different way and are a little bit more accommodating. So we*

> *make the effort to sort of put our students in with those teachers. Now I don't know what that does for the other teachers, but I don't think they really realize it. So it doesn't matter.*

Christine referred to their dealings with other teachers and the administrators in terms of politics, wherein she and Cathy were advocates for their "kids."

Finally, these teachers collaborated in maintaining links with employers and tertiary education providers. Part of their Special Education program involved providing specialized career counselling for the students' "on the program" and their parents.

When asked what aspects of their work were not done collaboratively, Cathy said that they no longer team-taught and that the specific aspects of day-to-day teaching were attended to independently. Christine concurred and explained that she would find close curriculum collaboration "more difficult." She attributed this potential difficulty to their different teaching styles.

Processes and frequency. Each collaborative team provided an audio-tape of one of their conferences. Analysis of the transcribed discussion between Cathy and Christine revealed that the process of "conferencing about kids" involved, (a) sharing knowledge about the individual child, (b) negotiating strategies for classroom teaching or the involvement of other teachers or the child's parents, (c) providing each other with positive feedback, (d) occasionally challenging each others' ideas, and (e) developing IPPs.

Some of the other processes mentioned by Christine included sharing resources, phoning parents, "help[ing] each other when we're busy," discussing issues related to the appropriate management of the students' classroom behaviours, especially with the view to offering advice to other teachers, and attending Special Education conferences together.

Cathy said that they "get together on a casual basis." More formal meetings occurred in preparation for school reports, which they also did together. Cathy, reflecting Christine's sentiments, said that she felt that their relationship was mutual and that they learned from each other.

Finding time to work effectively was an ongoing problem in all of the partnerships. Cathy and Christine said that they met during lunch, and before and after school. For three years they requested to be scheduled to have their preparation lessons at the same time but to date their requests had not been accommodated. Based solely on inferences drawn from the teachers' tone of voice and facial expressions when discussing their dealings with administrators, this seemed to

cause the teachers some distress. They concluded that while administrators said that they valued the Special Education program, they were unwilling to offer the support in terms of coordinated preparation periods that the two teachers said was highly desirable.

Discussion

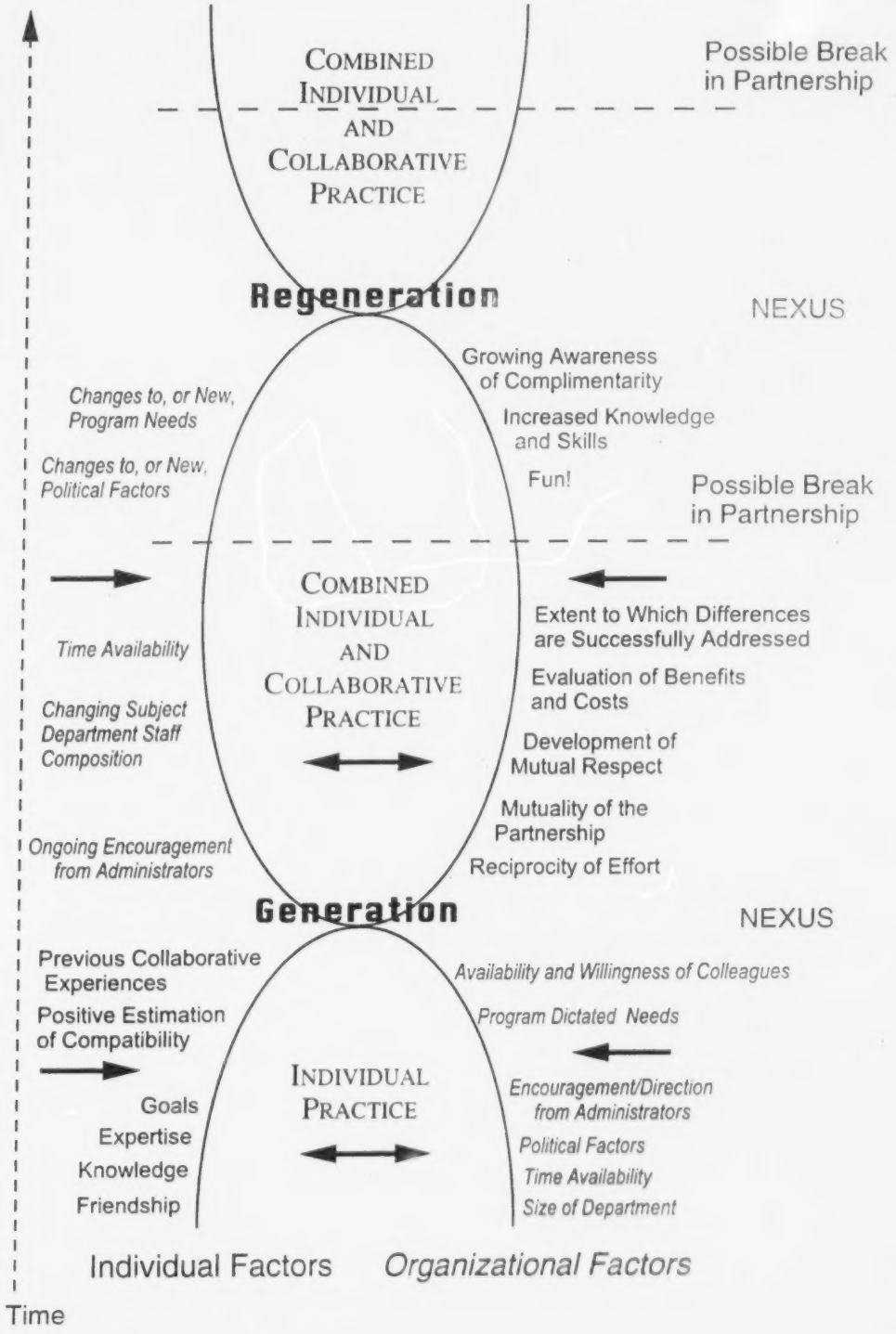
This discussion addresses the development of the collaborations and a description of the contexts and processes of the teachers' joint–work.

How Have the Partnerships Developed?

The inception and development of the five partnerships can be understood in terms of both individual and organizational factors. At the time of inception, a nexus occurred between these factors, providing the impetus and opportunity for the partnership to be inaugurated. The development of the partnerships was then influenced by these factors, some of which changed due to either the operation of the collaboration or external influences. Over time, some of these factors changed to such an extent that they resulted in a new nexus, precipitating a change in either the purposes or processes of the collaboration. These findings are presented graphically in Figure 2. This graphic presents the development of the collaborative partnerships through four phases: (a) individual practice, (b) generation, (c) blended collaborative and individual practice, and (d) regeneration. Conceivably, phases (c) and (d) could recur until there was a decisive change in one or more of the organizational or individual factors.

Phase 1: Individual Practice. In this phase the teachers ostensibly carried out their duties individually. Social interaction occurred with other staff members, most frequently within the subject area. The individual teachers were developing an awareness of their own strengths, limitations, needs, and aspirations and those of their colleagues. The two characteristics that were mentioned by each of the participants with respect to their estimations of their colleagues as potential working partners were flexibility and willingness to reciprocate in terms of effort and generosity with materials and ideas. Knowledge of their colleagues was derived from their social and professional interactions and occasionally through covert observation, as was the case with Peter, Patrick, and Jenny. Friendships emerged, like those between the majority of the participants, while other relations remained distant. Occasional sharing of ideas and resources occurred, but these were sporadic and not necessarily reciprocated, as was the case with Patrick and his dealings with other members of the Science department. It is important to note that these relations were not limited to the department or the school. For instance, Peter and Patrick's

FIGURE 2. *Developmental Stages in Self-Initiated High School Teacher Collaboration*



acquaintance and sharing began prior to Peter's appointment at Parkview. Prior to the inception of these collaborations, all of the teachers were involved in at least one other collaborative partnership.

The pre-collaborative interactions were effected to varying extents by organizational factors, such as the nature of the programs, the composition of the departments, the arrangement of the school timetable, school policies, practices and norms, and the actions of administrators. An example of one is the relations between members of the Science department at Parkview which were collegial but distant.

The Individual Practice Phase may extend over several years, as was the case with Jenny and James, Anne and Alan, and Cathy and Christine, or continue for only a matter of days after the arrival at the school of one of the teachers, as was the case with Patrick and Pater, and to a lesser extent with Harry and Helen.

Phase 2: Generation. At this point a nexus occurred between individual and organizational factors. The following summaries of the inauguration of each of the partnerships show the complexity of the nexus. Having already exchanged resources and established that they had similar aspirations and interests, Peter and Patrick began their collaboration almost immediately upon Patrick's arrival at Parkview. The previous personal experience of being assisted by Jim inclined Patrick to offer assistance. The way in which this assistance was valued and promptly reciprocated by Peter came as a welcome change for Patrick and their collaboration was assured. Jenny and James' existing friendship, James' previous, positive experience of team teaching with another teacher who decided to resign from the school, the principal's decision to allow James to co-opt a partner, and Jenny's part-time contract status and the recent undesirable change in her teaching assignment, among other factors, led to the commencement of their collaboration.

For Harry and Helen, being the only Science teachers at Hindmarsh, their "love of science," and their shared commitment to the success of the Science program and the school, were just three of many factors comprising the nexus leading to their collaboration. The beginning of Anne and Alan's collaboration was precipitated by renovations to the school. However, the desire of the administrators to have a class team–taught in a classroom that could accommodate 60 students did not mean that these particular teachers had to be involved. The principal's decision to approach Alan and to allow him to nominate a partner suggests certain judgements on his part; positive assessments of Alan, no doubt based on observations of his teaching and interpersonal skills. Other factors that comprise this nexus include the pre-existence of a collegial, sharing

relationship, shared professional respect—"I'd teach with him tomorrow" and Alan's choice of Anne—and their estimations of potential compatibility and complementarity in the classroom. Finally, Cathy and Christine's collaboration commenced as the result of several factors. These included: their established friendship, Cathy's estimation of Christine's ability, Christine's increasing dissatisfaction with teaching Business Studies, the success of the Special Education program, and the principal's decision to ask Cathy to nominate a partner.

Phase 3: Blended Collaborative and Individual Practice. Individual and organizational factors combine to influence the tasks, process, and frequency of the collaboration. Additionally, these factors accounted for the relative mix between collaborative and individual practice. The final relation between these variables occurred when the collaborative and individual activities brought about changes in the individual and organizational factors.

The influence of organizational and individual factors on the collaborative and individual practices was relatively straightforward. Presenting lessons together was integral to the team–teaching assignments of Jenny and James, and Anne and Alan. In these partnerships, the nature of the assignment determined that they needed to meet to plan and discuss aspects of their course. Cathy and Christine's responsibilities as teachers of a Special Education program precipitated "conferencing about the kids" and developing strategies to work effectively with other staff members. Additionally, after one year of team–teaching with Cathy, Christine decided to teach her class independently. She felt that she had learned enough from observing her colleague and that further "close curriculum collaboration" would be difficult because of their differences in "style." Since it was not necessary to deal with these differences in order to "conference about the kids," the processes in this collaboration changed after the first year. Patrick and Peters' relative inexperience, enthusiasm for their subject, isolation within the Physics department, desire to be effective and innovative teachers, and differing views on team-teaching and peer-observation determined, to a large extent, the activities that they shared collaboratively.

The effect of the collaborative and individual practices on the organizational and individual factors can be seen in the following examples. Patrick and Peter's collaboration resulted in the "fast-tracking" of their learning. This effected their estimations of their own future needs for collaboration. Consider, for example, how the frequency with which they would demonstrate different uses of equipment may change in the future. At some time they must approach a point where they have shared most of what they know about the various uses for specific apparatus. This is similar to how Christine decided that she had learned all she could, or needed to, from Cathy and therefore decided to no longer team–teach with her.

As Jenny and James have continued to learn about each other and how they teach, they have that the focus of their meetings gradually changed. Having dealt with some of their differences they shifted to spending more time discussing specific aspects of lessons. In the future, as they become more comfortable with each other in the classroom, it might be expected that on the basis of their pre-existing friendship they will begin to have more "fun." If this transpires then it will mirror Anne and Alan's experience. The enjoyment that these two derived from team-teaching encouraged them to continue this mode of teaching after the first year.

Phase 4: Regeneration. This nexus often occurs at the commencement of a new school year when there is a change in the school schedule or program offerings. Conceivably, the expected growth at Hindmarsh will mean that Helen and Harry will be joined by one or more new members of the Science department. Jenny and James' team-teaching could end as Jenny's part-time contract is renegotiated. Similarly, the administrators—including the English coordinator—at St Agnes may decide to reassign Anne and Alan to different English classes.

The above reports of the individual teacher's understandings of their collaborative partnerships revealed that a regenerative nexus occurred when immediate learning or task needs were met. An example was the previously discussed change to Cathy and Christine's collaboration. Also characteristic of this stage was the removal of the organizational factors that precipitated Anne and Alan's collaboration. No longer needing to work together, they discovered that they shared "similar intellectual interests" and enjoyed each others' company. Further, they realized that they had become better teachers as a result of teaching together. These unexpected outcomes informed the goals of their second year of team–teaching, that is, intellectual stimulation, increased professional satisfaction, and professional growth. These new goals changed the frequency, formality, and topics of their meetings. As Alan said, they began to explore the "why" questions, having already met the pressing need to answer the "what" questions in their first year.

An effect of this regenerative nexus is that it strengthens the partnership. It represents a stage of growth and bonding, and a refocussing not only of the goals of the partnership, but a reaffirmation of the commitment to shared goals.

What Tasks Do These Teachers Attend to When They Collaborate?

Collaborative partnerships attend to a number of tasks which fall into four main categories of purpose: Pedagogical, Professional Development, Micropolitical, and Individual Support and Relationship Maintenance. These categories are shown with listings of specific tasks in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Collaborative Tasks by Purpose

Pedagogical	Professional Development	Micropolitical	Individual Support and Relationship Maintenance
Team–teaching Joint–planning Resource sharing Resource development Advising Assessment Course Evaluation	Explaining Demonstrating Peer-observation Discussion "Double-thinking"	Strategizing: - Advising - Planning Dealing with differences: - Avoidance - Negotiating compromises Positioning - For favours with others - Opting to collaborate	Sharing the workload Providing Positive Feedback Having Fun

Pedagogical. These were tasks directly related to instruction and included team–teaching, joint–planning, resource sharing and development, assessment of students, and evaluation of lessons and courses. These activities were evident in each partnership, although more so in the two that involved team–teaching. Of the tasks and activities discussed in this section, the most frequent and pervasive was resource sharing.

Professional development. These tasks were undertaken primarily for the purpose of expanding the knowledge and skills of teachers. The tasks included were as follows: (a) explaining, for example sharing knowledge about a student, topic, strategy, (b) demonstrating, as was the case with the Science teachers in the study, (c) peer-observation, this varied from the surreptitious observations of colleagues to spending extended periods of time in the classroom together while team-teaching, (d) discussion, as was engaged in by all participants and covered specific issues related to the content of the courses being taught, personal philosophies of teaching, and general topics of mutual interest pertaining to education, and (e) "double-thinking" denoting

reflection for the purpose of sharing, thinking–out–loud, refinement of ideas, and incorporation of new ideas during discussion.

Micropolitical. The purpose of these tasks was to further the micropolitical goals of one or both of the partners. Micropolitics relates generally to the "conflictive interests that swirl around schools" (Townsend, 1990, p. 208) and specifically with power and how people use it to influence others and protect themselves (Blase, 1991). The position taken here is similar to that presented by Iannaccone (1975) and Ball (1987) when they observed that micropolitical activities are pervasive in educational organizations. Accordingly, the assumption is made that these teachers engage in such actions no more or less frequently than other teachers. It can be seen that some of these collaborations were highly effective in achieving their micropolitical goals. Indeed, the decision to collaborate was akin to the development of political lobby and support groups in larger social contexts. Such groups are often seen to exercise considerably more influence than that achieved by individuals acting independently.

Three categories of tasks are related to the achievement of micropolitical purposes of these collaborations and these are discussed below. While all of these tasks are evident in each of the partnerships, their extent and importance varied.

1. *Strategizing*. This involved the formulation of plans of action designed to influence the actions of peers, administrators, and others. Cathy and Christine often engaged in development of strategies to influence the actions of other teachers toward students with learning disabilities. They also discussed how to influence administrators to schedule the staff in such a way as to ensure that students were placed with "desirable" teachers. Peter and Patrick have, on occasion, discussed strategies for informing administrators of student misbehaviour in ways which precipitated responses that were in keeping with Peter and Patrick's estimation of justice. These behaviours were evident in all the partnerships.

2. *Dealing with difference*. Within each partnership, differences between the teachers emerged as a central factor. Recognizing the differences and assessing the extent to which the differences could be or needed to be mediated was evident in the interviews with each of the teachers. As such the micropolitical activities identified in this category pertain to what the teachers did in response to recognition of differences. These activities ranged from: (a) deliberate avoidance of activities or discussions that were likely to bring the differences into sharp relief, most evident in the non team-teaching partnerships, (b) clear statements of the differences in the hope that understanding would lead to acceptance, the clearest example being in the relations

between Helen and Harry, and less so between Jenny and James, (c) negotiation of differences, clearly an important task in the team-teaching partnerships, which in turn was a pre–cursor to (d) compromise solutions wherein the differences were seen to be of value and were integrated into the approach, evident to a remarkable extent between Anne and Alan, or (e) mutual adjustment where acceptance of the differences was still tentative, but the intent to reach an integration was still held, as was occurring between Jenny and James.

3. *Positioning*. While not the most important reason for deciding to collaborate with a specific partner, in each of these partnerships at least one of the teachers admitted to the existence of some ulterior, personal motive. Often this motive was known to the colleague, and on one occasion, while not known, was held by both participants. Throughout the chapter these motives were alluded to, and yet, to present them here in anything but a very general manner, would pose a threat to the ethics of this research. Suffice to say that the some teachers saw their collaboration as resulting in their improved positioning with regard to dealings with other employees in the school.

Individual Support and Relationship Maintenance. These tasks had the effect of helping one or both partners in the exercise of their duties and responsibilities in the school. They had the added effect of maintaining the relationship. In one sense, all of the tasks undertaken in these partnerships resulted either directly or indirectly in support and assistance and effect the ongoing nature of the partnership. Specifically, there are three activities which have support and assistance as their overriding function:

1. *Sharing the workload*. The division of labour evident in all of the partnerships and the specific instance of Alan mentioning that they help each other with marking when one of them is particularly busy, are examples of this activity.

2. *Providing positive feedback*. All of the participants recounted stories of times when they had received praise from their colleagues. While not quoted directly earlier in this paper, Helen mentioned that she saw the letter that Harry had written in support of her application for permanent certification. She said she felt surprise and gratitude on reading his glowing assessment of her professionalism and abilities. This type of feedback was most overt in Anne and Alan's partnership and least overt in Peter and Patrick's collaboration.

3. *Having "fun."* Several of the participants stated that they engaged in discussion and team-teaching because of the enjoyment they derived from their interaction. This was mentioned most explicitly by Anne and Alan, and Jenny and James. Even Harry and Helen, whose

difficulties were described earlier, said that they often enjoyed their interaction and the good humour of their banter.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The concluding comments relate to the research question: What are some of the forms and contents of self-initiated collaboration between high school teachers? The five partnerships in this study vary in their formation, development, composition, purposes, processes, intensity, outcomes, and location in the school as an organization.

The form and content of the collaborative partnerships in this study were determined by a combination of individual and organizational factors. At various times these factors merged to form a nexus which resulted in the formation and later reformations of the collaboration. The operation of the collaboration and other external factors brought about changes in the forms and content of the collaborations over time.

The degree to which these collaborations were self-initiated varied both within and between the partnerships. The nexus of organizational and individual factors effected the extent to which the individuals involved felt free to initiate or respond to the opportunities to enter collaborative partnerships.

The activities undertaken in these collaborations served four broad purposes: pedagogical, professional development, micropolitical, and individual support and relationship maintenance. Reciprocity of effort and mutuality of outcomes were salient features of all the partnerships. The existence of reciprocity and mutuality was not a feature of each task, but a quality of the partnership as a whole. The activity that was common to all these partnerships was the sharing of educational resources and materials. At this level the importance of dealing with individual differences was far less than when the partnerships involved team-teaching. Where such differences were successfully resolved and such resolutions resulted in the integration of different perspectives, the teachers reported high levels of personal satisfaction and professional growth. The way in which these differences were dealt with was clearly one of the most important determinants of the nature of the evolution of the partnership.

We believe that these findings are significant in that they add to our understanding of high school teacher collaboration. Further, the association among the form, focus, and outcomes of the collaboration and factors such as gender, subject specialization, and personality traits is of interest. Further study in these two areas is recommended.

These findings should aid practitioners in several ways. High school teachers may develop a better understanding of their own work practices and learn how to develop closer collegial working relationships through an awareness of how others have dealt with the issues identified in this paper. School administrators may pause to reflect on the role they can play in minimizing the effects of barriers to collaboration, and what steps they can take to encourage the formation of collaborative working partnerships. Because each of the teachers had experienced assistance and support from colleagues during the early stages of their careers, encouragement of informal mentorship for new teachers is one contribution that school leaders can make in their efforts to encourage ongoing collaborative work practices.

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